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CHICAGO'S PUBLIC HOUSING today

Monthly Report Chicago Housing Authority
Issued August 15, 1954

608 South Dearborn Street Chicago 5, Illinois

THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954 AND THE CHA BUILDING PROGRAM

Congress has enacted and the President has signed the Housing Act of 1954. Under the Act, the Chicago Housing Authority is free to proceed with the building of all the low-rent homes it now has under contract with the federal government. In past years, actual construction of low-rent housing has been limited by Acts of Congress.

The city also has a right to a share in the 35,000 public housing dwellings authorized for new contract throughout the nation by June 30, 1954. But the number of steps required before contracts can be signed make meeting this early deadline questionable.

CHA has some 6,000 low-rent homes in developmen under its first contract with the federal government. By the end of 1954, construction can begin on about 1,000 of these on sites where slums have been cleared. By June, 1955, an additional 2,200 are expected to go into construction. Bids on the balance (cont'd on p. 2)

RACINE COURTS won the Babette Stiefel Award and DEARBORN HOMES was presented with the Howard Shaw Cup for "best project appearance during the year" when prizes were awarded at the Fifth Annual CHA Interproject Festival on Sunday, August 8th. LAWNDALE GARDENS, winner of last year's Stiefel Cup, was the scene of the celebration. (See story on p. 3)

John R. Fugard, Chairman Joseph P. Sullivan, Vice Chairman John L. Yancey, Treasurer Samuel N. Katzin Elizabeth Wood, Executive Secretary

are anticipated by the end of 1955.

City's Share in the New Housing

To be eligible for a share in the 35,000 new low-rent homes authorized for contract by June 30, 1955, a community must have a workable program for eliminating slums and preventing new blight under Title I of the federal Housing Act of 1949.

Chicago has such a program. Before the Housing Authority can apply for federal contract, however, these steps are necessary:

1. The number of families losing their homes as a result of public rebuilding must be determined. (The 1954 Act provides that the number of dwellings allocated to a community may not exceed the number needed to relocate families displaced by federal, state, or local clearance programs.)

2. The City Council must certify the accuracy of the number before the Housing Authority comes up with sites for the proposed housing projects.

3. The City Council must approve the recommended sites. (In 1950, when CHA sought approval of 12 sites for public housing, this step alone took almost a year.)

4. After site approval, CHA must prepare preliminary plans for approval by the federal government, to enable cost estimates of the various projects. The plans therefore include preliminary architectural sketches, specifications, surveys, and site design. (In the past, preparation of preliminary plans has required three or four months.)

Telescoping the time schedule from nearly two years down to ten months is the job ahead. Work on the first step -- determining the number of families losing their homes according to present plans for Chicago's redevelopment -- is already under way.

REQUESTS FOR HOUSING HIT NEW HIGH: In the month of June, 1,428 Chicago families registered their housing needs with CHA Rental Office. Total registrations for the first six months of 1954 numbered 7,125, a record high. This is 41 percent above the 5,066 registered in the first half of 1953.

RAIN FAILS TO DAMPEN ENTHUSIASM AT CHA INTERPROJECT FESTIVAL

It takes more than hailstones and a rainstorm to keep CHA tenants and their friends at home when a CHA Interproject Festival is on the calendar. This was proved on Sunday, August 8, when more than five hundred people stood in the rain for four hours on the bunting-decorated California Boulevard parkway in front of Lawndale Gardens to learn who won the project trophies this year and to applaud the speakers and the talent program.

Racine Courts walked off with the Babette Stiefel Award and the Howard Shaw Cup went to Dearborn Homes. These cups are presented annually to projects gaining best project appearance during the year in (1) the rowhouse and walk-up apartment building class and (2) in the elevator-apartment building category. The Arch Winning Cup was won by Wentworth Gardens for having shown the greatest tenant interest and initiative and the greatest improvement over the previous year.

Racine: Two-Time Winner

Winning the Stiefel Award is a second victory for Racine Courts. This two-story rowhouse development at 108th and Racine Avenue (cont'd on p. 3)

Drum Majorettes led the parade . . .

and the contingent from Olander Homes added an international note.

WENTWORTH GARDENS won the Arch Winning Cup for outstanding improvement over last year.

QUEEN IS CROWNED . . . CHA Chairman John R. Fugard with the queens and her court.

won the trophy in 1952 and was host to the Festival in 1953. How can Racine's 121 families with their five hundred children keep a good stand of grass and grow all kinds of flowers? The answer is that the children themselves take the annual Stiefel Cup competition seriously and restrict their play to the paved courts.

At Dearborn Homes, 27th and State Streets, the grounds are largely maintained by the management staff. Some of the children and the senior citizens, however, take part in planting and caring for flower beds. But the best management care could not produce an award winner without the cooperation of all tenants. Dearborn's lawns are green -- its trees and shrubs are flourishing -- in a neighborhood with blight or the debris that goes with new construction around it.

If Wentworth Gardens keeps the pace it has set this year, it promises to be a serious contender for the Stiefel Cup at next year's Festival. Capturing the Winning Cup was a well-deserved honor for this rowhouse and walk-up apartment development at 37th and Wentworth Avenue, where the tenants largely maintain the grounds.

All projects were inspected by five judges on two separate occasions during July. They were scored on lawns, upkeep of shrubs and trees, cultivation of gardens, absence of litter, appearance of buildings, cleanliness of windows, condition of fences, and general neatness. Judges were Raymond S. Knapp of the Chicago Park District; Olive E. Hill, volunteer worker for the Salvation Army; Mrs. Georgette Rooney, chairman of the Interproject Festival Committee, and two members of the CHA staff.

Flower Display

Tenants brought the best flowers from their own gardens to make effective displays in the booths set up on California Boulevard. The blue ribbon for first prize went to Ida B. Wells Homes, the red ribbon for second prize went to Racine Courts, and the third prize white ribbon to Lathrop Homes. Leclaire Courts and Wentworth Gardens got honorable mention.

Flower booths were judged on appearance, arrangement, color combinations and variety of flowers used. Judges were Betty Baird, National Conference of Christians and Jews; Russell Gish, CHA; William Jones, Near West Side Community Council; Hugh F. Lewis, dahlia expert; Mrs. Robert MacRae, Illinois League of Women Voters; Kenji Nakana, Chicago Resettlers Committee; Irvin Neruda, Lawndale Gardens; and Robert Van Tress, Chicago Park District.

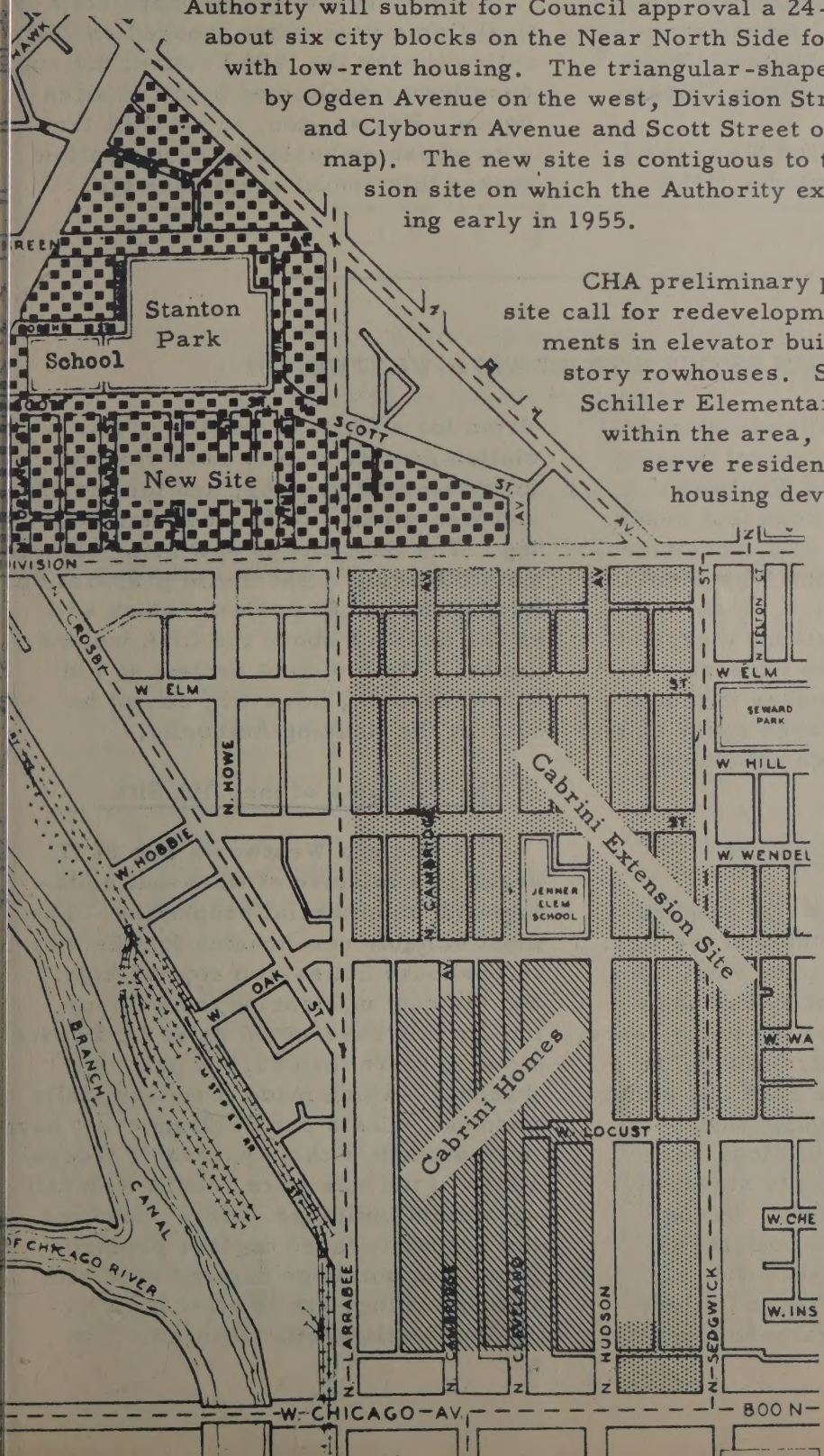
Hobby Winners

Children and teen-agers participated in the display of hobbies and crafts. On display were enameled jewelry, woodwork and leathercraft, made in craft classes in the various projects. Again, Ida B. Wells Homes took the blue ribbon, with Lathrop winning second place and Robert H. Brooks, third. Olander Homes and Lawndale Gardens won honorable mention.

Hobby displays were scored on originality, skill, variety and appearance. Judges were Ray Crisp, CHA; Regina Hall, South Parkway YWCA; Mrs. Edna Hanson, Henry Booth House; Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Markwart, jewelry (cont'd on p. 6)

CHA SEEKS NEAR NORTH SIDE SITE FOR LOW-RENT HOUSING

At the first meeting of the City Council in September, the Chicago Housing Authority will submit for Council approval a 24-acre site covering about six city blocks on the Near North Side for redevelopment with low-rent housing. The triangular-shaped area is bounded by Ogden Avenue on the west, Division Street on the south, and Clybourn Avenue and Scott Street on the east (see map). The new site is contiguous to the Cabrini Extension site on which the Authority expects to start building early in 1955.



CHA preliminary plans for the new site call for redevelopment with 826 apartments in elevator buildings and two-story rowhouses. Stanton Park and Schiller Elementary School, located within the area, will remain to serve residents of the proposed housing development.

The 826 apartments contemplated for the new project are part of the 10,500 low-rent homes placed under contract with the federal government in 1950. Because difficulties in land acquisition eliminated two other Council-approved sites altogether, and problems in site planning made it necessary to reduce the number of homes originally scheduled for building on other sites, a new location is required to accommodate the dwellings remaining under the contract.

FLOWER FESTIVAL
(cont'd from p. 4)

enamelists, silversmiths and art teachers; Dr. Henry Morrison; Dr. Roderick Pugh, Veterans' Administration; and Miss Elaine Switzer, Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago.

Because many of the Festival visitors had never visited a CHA apartment, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Roberts of 2754 West 26th Street graciously opened their home for inspection.

A deep bow to the Interproject Festival Committee which labored so valiantly to make the 1954 Festival the success it was acclaimed by all in attendance. Praise, too, to all CHA tenants whose enthusiastic participation makes this annual event possible.

CHA RULES OUT SITE AT 43D & WENTWORTH

Reluctantly, CHA is abandoning plans to build a new low-rent housing development at 43d and Wentworth Avenue, in a neighborhood that needs rebuilding help. The site, recommended and supported by the West Kenwood Community Council which was greatly interested in seeing a project built in the area, is too expensive to be built with the rowhouses it should have--and not enough open space can be cleared to make high apartment buildings feasible.

Why the Site Was Selected

The 43d and Wentworth neighborhood, under the leadership of the Rev. John Ireland Gallery in the West Kenwood Community Council, has been improvement conscious for many years. The Council got the city building department to survey the area and strictly enforce building regulations, with the result that many buildings were repaired and brought up to standard, and some were torn down. Recognizing the need for new building to further encourage conservation of still useful housing, Father Gallery and his associates spearheaded a drive for a Chicago Dwellings Association project at 46th and Princeton, for non-profit housing, and for the 43d and Wentworth site for low-rent housing. The CDA site is now being cleared by the Housing Authority in preparation for the non-profit project, which will be for families above the CHA income limits. The low-rent project at 43d and Wentworth, however, cannot be built by the Housing Authority.

The Dilemma of the CHA Site

The 43d and Wentworth site of 17 acres is a mixture of worn-out buildings and commercial properties. The most suitable new housing for the site is rowhouse units--two stories high. But the cost of clearing the built-up land in this case would raise land costs alone to more than $6,000 per new dwelling--which made it economically unsound. Costs per dwelling could have been brought within approvable federal limits if the site were rebuilt with tall apartment buildings. Here, however, the Authority faced another problem. High-rise buildings demand good site planning if they are to offer good living for families with children. The

number of commercial properties that must remain, and the way they were interspersed with residential properties on the site made impossible a satisfactory site plan with open space and playgrounds.

In effect, the Authority had to conclude after long study, that redevelopment of the site could be successfully accomplished on a sound economic basis only if the redeveloping agency could acquire the land at a "write-down" figure. And under existing regulations, the Authority cannot take advantage of such procedures.

IDA B. WELLS HOMES on Sunday, August 15, was presented with an award in the Chicago Urban League's ninth annual Block Beautiful Contest.

LATHROP BOY GETS ANNAPOLIS APPOINTMENT

H. Lawrence Reeger, 18, entered the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis on July 1, a well-deserved reward for a boy who has worked hard to realize his ambition. Larry has lived at Lathrop Homes with his mother, his younger sister, and brother since he was two years old.

Larry took the examination for the Naval Academy in January, and when he learned he had passed, he left the Navy Pier Branch of the University of Illinois to go to work pending final decision on his appointment. Because there were 75 boys from Illinois who qualified for appointment, Congressman Sidney R. Yates gave a competitive examination to determine the nominee, and Larry came out in first place.

Always an outstanding student and excellent leader, Larry began getting recognition for his talents when he won the American Legion Award for Citizenship at the time of his graduation from grade school. He comes by his talent naturally, for his mother, Mrs. Catherine Reeger, has for many years given unselfishly of her time and energy in working with the project's Cub Scouts and other tenant activities.

"Lathrop Homes have provided an ideal environment for my children in their formative years," says Mrs. Reeger. "There have always been nice children here for companionship and the grounds have afforded lovely play space." The family is one of Lathrop's original tenants and is still occupying the same apartment they rented in March, 1938.

CHA INCOME FROM RENTS NEARS $7-1/2 MILLION MARK

Rental income from almost 13,000 apartments in 26 permanent low-rent and six veterans' temporary housing projects is estimated by CHA at $7,374,830 in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1955. This is 16 percent over the $6,377,000 collected by the Authority in the past year, due to the addition of some 1,500 new apartments to the rent rolls.

When additional apartments now under construction and in development are completed, CHA will be operating about 20,000 rental homes for Chicago's low-income families. If economic conditions remain stable and it is possible to hold rents at present levels, these 20,000 rental homes will probably represent an annual rental income of some $12 million.

Expenditures Boost City Revenue

Against this total income, the Authority estimates expenses for the current fiscal year at $7,316,869. Major items included are $522,076 for payments to local taxing bodies in lieu of regular real estate taxes. This is roughly five times the amount the same properties paid the city in regular real estate taxes before the projects were built. A total of $2,560,209 is set up for repairs, maintenance and replacements, janitorial and other services, of which about $2,000,000 represents salaries to maintenance and custodial personnel.

Payments to local utility companies for gas, electricity and water are estimated at $1,854,870. Local insurance companies will collect premiums of $85,842 for insurance policies covering the housing developments. Debt service, including interest payments and amortization on housing bonds, will require $870,267.

Beyond the addition of almost 13,000 standard homes to the city's housing supply, the public housing program through its expenditures adds to the city's wealth by increasing tax revenue, salaries and business.

Estimates of income and expense indicate that the Authority's net for the year will be $57,961. Net income from federal housing will be used to reduce the amount of the federal contribution required to meet debt service. Net from city-state financed projects will be returned to the local taxing bodies in accordance with agreements with the city to increase wherever possible the 10 percent-of-rent payment made in lieu of taxes.

BRIDGEPORT TENANTS FORM CLUB FOR TEEN-AGERS

Parents at Bridgeport Homes, who have felt a growing concern over the lack of constructive recreational activities available to teen-agers, have formed an active and enthusiastic organization in the housing development.

With the cooperation of the Bridgeport management staff, the group held a meeting on July 22 in the project community building with representatives from the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, the Valentine Boys Club, Benton House, Fellowship House and Mark White Park, to get

advice on how to set up a positive recreational program for their children.

First act of the organization was to set up a combined planning committee composed of teen-agers and representatives of the parents' organization. As a result, a teen-agers club has been organized, and the first project is the sponsoring of a series of Sunday afternoon dances in the project recreation room. A Camp Fire Girls group has been organized, and parent volunteers will cooperate on the launching of other organized activities.

A CHA TENANT WRITES HIS PROJECT MANAGER

"Dear Mr. Greenhalgh:

"For three and a half years I've lived in Racine Courts and have tried to show my appreciation of living in a CHA home by working with the people trying to show a good community spirit, but I feel that my job isn't complete unless I let the Authorities know of my past and of my life at Racine Courts....

"I dwelled in the same house that rats and roaches did.

"Because my family was poor and subject to segregation I had to witness and long endure the dirt, rats, roaches, crime, dope addicts and old delapidated houses of our Chicago Slums. As I sit here on my nice green lawn writing of the past that could have caused my detriment, I can focus my mind that old fire trap cracker box with only one entrance that I used to live in. I can just see and hear the rats walking the foyer like men. I watched many days the thugs snatch pocket books and rob the bread man who was out to make an honest living.

"...We applied through the land clearance office for a home in a CHA project. We waited for a long time for our application to be answered, during the time the neighborhood was being torn apart by the land clearance. Then we started to pray that our application be answered. When we had given up hope the letter came saying we were to become residents of Racine Courts....After moving to Racine Courts we felt blessed and glorified that we no longer had to endure the slum area.

"Since moving into a CHA home it has made us see the light and do the things people should do to be good worthy citizens; we have joined the church, social and civic organization to prevent our present neighborhood from adding to the slums of Chicago.

" Sincerely yours,

A. S. "

Chicago Housing Authority
608 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago 5, Illinois

today

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DID THE DAISY TELL these children from Dearborn Homes that their project would win the Howard Shaw Cup at the CHA Fifth Annual Inter-project Festival? (See story on p. 3)

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CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENTS

COMPLETED - 26 Developments - 12,390 Dwellings

1. Jane Addams Houses	(F)	1,027	14. Leclaire Courts	(C-S)
2. Julia C. Lathrop Homes	(F)	925	15. Racine Courts	(C-S)
3. Trumbull Park Homes	(F)	462	16. Ogden Courts	(C-S)
4. Ida B. Wells Homes	(F)	1,658	17. Prairie Ave. Cts. -I-II	(C-S)
5. Frances Cabrini Homes	(F)	586	18. Archer Courts	(C-S)
6. Robert H. Brooks Homes	(F)	834	19. Loomis Courts	(C-S)
7. Bridgeport Homes	(F)	141	20. Philip Murray Homes	(F)
8. Lawndale Gardens	(F)	128	21. Victor A. Olander Homes	(F)
9. Altgeld Gardens	(F)	1,499	22. Leclaire Courts Ext.	(F)
10. Wentworth Gardens	(F)	422	23. Grace Abbott Homes-I	(F)
11. Dearborn Homes	(F)	800	24. Ida B. Wells Extension-I	(F)
12. Maplewood Courts	(C-S)	132	25. Harold L. Ickes Homes-I	(F)
13. Harrison Courts	(C-S)	126	26. Gov. Frank O. Lowden Homes	(F)

UNDER CONSTRUCTION - 5 Developments - 1,859 Dwellings

17. Prairie Ave. Cts. -III	(C-S)	28	25. Harold L. Ickes Homes-II	(F)
23. Grace Abbott Homes-II	(F)	570	27. Gov. Henry Horner Homes	(F)
24. Ida B. Wells Extension	(F)	195		

IN DESIGN AND LAND PURCHASE STAGE - 7 Developments - 6,052 Dwellings

17. Prairie Ave. Cts. -IV	(C-S)	8	30. New Rockwell Neighborhood	(F)
27. Gov. Henry Horner Homes-II	(F)	325	31. Prairie Ave. Cts. Ext.	(F)
28. 35th & State	(F)	1,648	32. Olander Homes Ext.	(F)
29. Cabrini Extension	(F)	1,921	33. Other Units Under Contract	(F)

VETERANS TEMPORARIES - 6 Sites - Demountables and Others (C-F)

(F) Financed with federal funds; (C-S) city and state funds; and (C-F) city and federal fun